

## MADIRAN AOC

## CHÂTEAU DE CROUSEILLES

## ROUGE 75cl



### Crouseilles

Situated in the very heart of the Madiran / Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh appellation, the village of Crouseilles is best known for its prestigious Chateau and its Wine Cooperative. The vines date back to 1737 when Dombidau de Crouseilles acquired from the Seigneur de Sadirac the "seigneurie" which now comprises the Chateau de Crouseilles' vineyard.

These days, Crouseilles with its Pyrenean vineyards is one of South-West France's most respected wine-making areas.

### The appellation

The Madiran Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée is situated at the foot of the Pyrenean mountains in the area called Vic-Bilh meaning 'Vieux Pays' or the Old Country. Forty kilometres from Pau, the medieval village of Madiran gives its name to the appellation.

Vines have been grown in this region since Antiquity and the wine's reputation was first established in the eleventh century at the time the Abbey of Madiran was founded in 1030 by Benedictine monks and transformed 30 years later, in 1060, into a Priory. Madiran's golden era was undoubtedly the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century when François 1st of France referred to it as "wine that aged very well" and Henri IV served Madiran wines to his most prestigious foreign and French guests in his Chateau de Pau.

Relatively mild winters; hot, stormy summers and dry, sunny autumns all contribute to the maturation of the grapes.

Tannat, a local, indigenous grape variety which is responsible for Madiran's distinctive identity, is undeniably, King of the grape varieties.

The cultivated surface area of 1400 hectares covers three departments: the Gers, the Pyrénées-Atlantiques and the Hautes-Pyrénées.

### The history of the wine

The vineyard of Château de Crouseilles covers 14 hectares of land surrounding an 18th-century château. The seigneurie of Crouseilles, situated in Bass-Navarre, consists in the 14th century of a tower of defense and stone bulwarks, playing a defensive role in front of French claims of the quite close border.

In 1979, the cooperative cellar of Crouseilles decides to acquire the castle and the vineyard in very bad state, neglected. With the will to restore in the wine of the castle its letters of nobility, the wine growers of Crouseilles transplant the vineyard in 1981. The Castle of Crouseilles is restored and the first year of "the modern time" is thrown in 1986.

### The terroir

The parcels selected for this cuvee are characterised by their south or south-westerly exposition and together comprise some of Madiran's most expressive terroirs. The heavy, compact variegated clay (white or yellow) imposes the mild drought conditions which are necessary for the vine to express its full potential. At a higher altitude, clay-gravel parcels are selected for their fantastic exposition offering optimal maturing conditions for the red grape varieties, Tannat in particular.

### Grape varieties

Tannat  
Cabernet Franc  
Cabernet Sauvignon

### Vineyard management

Traditional, rigorous vineyard management with Guyot pruning or Cordon training depending on the grape variety. Various vineyard management tasks (removal of basal buds, de-suckering, leaf-removal and bunch-thinning) contribute to a disease-free environment while at the same time optimising the quality of the harvest. Regular surveillance and modern equipment ensure the sustainable development of the vineyard.

Rows are grassed over to help the vines reach a sufficient water supply and optimise the aromatic potential of the grapes.

The most delicate grape varieties, such as Tannat, are harvested by hand to ensure that the grapes are intact on arrival in the winery.



## Winemaking

After malolactic fermentation the wine is blended and matured in French oak barrels (a third of which are renewed - 30% new oak) for a period of 11 to 14 months. Approximately three rackings take place during this time before the wine is transferred to stainless steel tanks for four months in order to bring complete harmony to the cuvee.

## Ageing

Each grape variety is harvested at phenolic maturity and vinified separately. A 48-hour period of pre-fermentation skin contact favours the diffusion of aromas and colour. Gentle pump-overs and punching down of the cap in combination with delestage (or 'rack and return') ensures the extraction process until fermentation begins. Temperatures are carefully controlled throughout the alcoholic fermentation process starting at 22 C, the activity of the yeast leads to a controlled rise in temperature to 26 C. Tannat skin contact never exceeds 25 days and that of Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon never exceeds 20 days which favours the diffusion of the best quality aromas and tannins. Once the free-run wine is drained off and the press wine put aside, malolactic fermentation is allowed to occur naturally at any time thus contributing to the roundness and balance of these wines. Malolactic fermentation can, depending on the particular tank, take place at any moment between November and March.

## Cellaring potential

10 years

## Tasting notes

A deep red colour with mauve tints is showcased by the delicacy of its aromatic palate: notes of black fruits (blackberry, blackcurrant) are mixed with notes of spice (black pepper, cloves). The attack is silky and supple and evolves to a place of harmony and balance. There is a sweetness to the elegant tannins which underscore the long, delicious finish of this fine wine.

## Food pairings

Serve the long narrow steak known as an 'onglet' with shallots; it is an extremely tender cut which, grilled or pan-fried, will go wonderfully with this noble, generous Madiran which delivers its full aromatic potential. The wine will also complement the aromatic richness of hard cheeses such as Cantal or Pyrenean.

## Ideal serving temperature

16 C

## The winemaker

Denis Degache



Denis, a qualified oenologist, has been in charge of vinifying the Madiran wines since 1999 and the Tannat grape no longer holds any secrets from him.

"The great Madiran terroirs reveal, over time, an unbeatable balance and richness of structure."



**CROUSEILLES**

GRANDS VINS - PIRENÉUS